

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Harry E. Mitchell today voted to make significant improvements to the nation's border and homeland security efforts, including the creation of a new Border Intelligence Fusion Center that would assist in producing border-related intelligence for Arizona law enforcement officers. The legislation, H.R. 1, of which Mitchell is a co-sponsor, would implement the recommendations of the bi-partisan 9/11 Commission.

Through the Border Intelligence Fusion Center, the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) would deploy officers and intelligence analysts to fusion centers in border states to produce border-related intelligence.

"The people of Arizona made clear that securing the border should be a top priority for this Congress," said Mitchell. "I'm proud that in the first 100 hours, we have taken concrete steps to provide better intelligence along the border and tighten security at our nation's airports and seaports."

The 9/11 Commission issued 41 recommendations to the Administration and Congress designed to improve border and homeland security, prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD, and develop strategies for preventing the spread of terrorism. Many of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations were completely ignored, while others were only partially implemented.

Other key 9/11 Commission recommendations Mitchell voted to implement include:

- Distributing state homeland security grants on the basis of risk
- Establishing a stand-alone grant program for first responder communication
- Inspecting 100 percent of air cargo over the next three years
- Scanning 100 percent of U.S.-bound shipping containers over the next five years
- Quickly accelerate installation of explosive detection systems for checked baggage
- Improving the U.S. non-proliferation program
- Creating a U.S. Coordinator for the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism and a Blue Ribbon commission to recommend further reforms
- Strengthening efforts to eliminate nuclear black-market networks

The legislation also requires ICE to provide the already-established Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center with necessary administrative support and funding needs, and requires Homeland Security to develop a plan for the center that outlines responsibilities of the participating agencies. If enacted, the Homeland Security Department must also submit a plan to accelerate the full implementation of an automated biometric entry and exit data system to Congress within seven days of enactment.